(c) The measures taken by ITDC to improve performance of Ashok Hotel, New Delhi *inter alia* include:

(i) Tactical rate offer based on business volume and occupancy position.

(ii) Aggressive marketing by way of tie-up with international/national airlines for crew and lay over business.

(iii) Issuing of Privilege Cards to valued customers.

(iv) Special Packages to PSU employees instead of conventional discounting

(v) Economy in expenditure.

Classification of tourist places

†293. SHRI RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK:
PROF. RAM GOPAL YADAV:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have categorized tourist places in the country; if so, the category under which the places of Himachal Pradesh including Kullu-Manali etc. have been kept;

(b) whether famous tourist places like Kullu-Manali and others in the country are considerably being damaged by the people carrying hotel and tourism businesses there;

(c) whether Government are taking any concrete steps to preserve natural beauty of these tourst sports; if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, what would be the conditions of these places with the passage of time alongwith its impact on the environment?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) to (d) Department of Tourism has not categorised tourist places. however 21 travel circuits and 12 destinations including Kullu-Manali-Lahul/ Spiti-Leh Monastic Circuit have been identified for development of tourist infrastructure.

Development and promotion of tourism is primarily undertaken by the State Governments. However, Department of Tourism provides financial assistance to States/UTs in consultation with them for development of tourist infrastrucutre. During 1999-2000 Rs. 691.79 lakhs was sanctioned for 17

†Orgional notice of the question was received in Hindi.

projects in Himachal Pradesh. Promotion of sustainable tourism, with emphasis on preserving the ecology is one of the salient points of Tourism policy.

Retirement age of ITDC Employees

294. SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering a proposal to roll back retirement age from 60 to 58 years for ITDC employees;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government are considering a Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) for its employees; and

(c) if the answer to part (a) and (b) be in positive, the details thereof and how many employees are expected to exit from the organisation by these two steps during the year?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) As per information given by ITDC, approximately, 1200 employees comprising of 200 executives and 1000 non-executives are likely to opt for Voluntary Retirement Scheme. As regards number of employees expected to exit due to rolling back retirement age, the information is not readily available and it can be estimated only on fixing up a cut off date for effecting roll back of retirement age. The Company has proposed that Roll back of retirement age should be given priority over introduction of Voluntary Retirement Scheme.

Duping of Foreign Tourists

†295. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that incidents of cheating, molestation, beating and fraud with the foreign tourists in the country have been increased too much;

(b) if so, the city-wise and year-wise details of such incidents during the last three years; and

(c) what action are being taken by Government to check these incidents?

†Origional notice of the question was received in Hindi